

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 JERUSA 00531 01 OF 02 261811Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 JERUSALEM 531

NODIS

FOR INR-SAUNDERS AND P/PRS-HODDING CARTER

USDEL NO 26

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, SF, US
SUBJ: PUBLIC THEMES AND PRESS BACKGROUNDER PRIOR TO BEGIN VISIT

1. SINCE ARRIVING IN THE AREA, AS YOU KNOW I HAVE LIMITED MYSELF IN PRESS REMARKS TO ONLY THE MOST GENERAL STATEMENTS ABOUT MY CURRENT MISSION. DESPITE SOME INITIATION FROM THE PRESS, I HAVE INSISTED THAT OUR QUIET DIPLOMACY IS NOT SERVED BY MY GIVING PUBLIC "TEMPERATURE READINGS" AFTER EACH MEETING I HAVE IN THE AREA. NOW, LOOKING TOWARD THE END OF THIS LEG OF THE MISSION, I AM UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE TO GIVE BACKGROUNDERS TO THE AMERICAN AND LOCAL PRESS ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. BY NOT DOING SO, WE RUN THE RISK OF APPEARING TO BE ENGAGED IN A COMPLETELY STERILE EXERCISE. THEREFORE, I AM CONSIDERING DOING THE BACKGROUNDERS AT THE VERY END OF THE TRIP -- IN CAIRO MARCH 7, IN JERUSALEM MARCH 8-9.

2. GIVEN THE PROXIMITY OF THE BEGIN VISIT AND THE CONNECTION ALREADY MADE IN THE PRESS BETWEEN IT AND MY NR SION, QUESTIONING AT THESE BACKGROUNDERS IS BOUND TO GO BEYOND THE NARROW CONFINES OF MY TALKS IN THE AREA TO THE PROSPECTS, FOR THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 JERUSA 00531 01 OF 02 261811Z

BEGIN TALKS IN WASHINGTON. THEREFORE, I BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL TO HAVE CLOSE COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEMES WE WANT TO HIT PRIOR TO THE BEGIN VISIT. BELOW ARE SOME SUGGESTED THEMES FOR POSSIBLE USE BOTH IN THE AREA AND IN WASHINGTON. AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, I WOULD LIKE YOUR REACTION TO MY GIVING THE PROPOSED BACKGROUNDERS, AND YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGES AND ADDITIONS TO THE THEMES FOR THE BEGIN VISIT.

3. SUGGESTED THEMES:

--WE FACT THE BEST OPPORTUNITY IN 30 YEARS FOR DECISIVE MOVEMENT TOWARD A FINAL SETTLEMENT OF THE ISRAELI-ARAB CONFLICT. WE DO NOT INTEND TO MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY. FOR IT TO BE GRASPED, HOWEVER, DIFFICULT DECISIONS MUST BE MADE FOR GIVING CONCRETE EXPRESSION TO THE POSSIBILITIES OPENED BY PRESIDENT SADAT'S DRAMATIC TRIP TO JERUSALEM.

--A NUMBER OF FACTORS MAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY UNIQUE:

--ISRAEL AND EGYPT HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR DETERMINATION TO REACH A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT AND ARE WORKING ON A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES TO FORM A FRAMEWORK FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS TO THAT END.

-- THE RUSSIANS ARE ON THE SIDELINES AND THE PLO IS WEAK AND DIVIDED. THE MODERATES OF THE ARAB WORLD SUPPORT PRESIDENT SADAT'S INITIATIVE. NEITHER ISRAEL NOR THE LARGEST ARAB STATE, THEREFORE, FEELS ITSELF CONSTRAINED BY THE EXTREMISTS, IN THE AREA IN MOVING TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT.

--THE UNITED STATES CONTINUES TO ACT AS MIDDLEMAN. IT HAS THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PARTIES, WHO AGREE THAT THE AMERICAN ROLE IS ESSENTIAL TO HELPING THEM HAMMER OUT CONCRETE AGREEMENT.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 JERUSA 00531 01 OF 02 261811Z

--AN EXAMPLE OF THIS ROLE WAS THE AGENDA FOR THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING IN JERUSALEM. WHEN NEITHER EGYPT NOR ISRAEL COULD AGREE ON AN AGENDA FOLLOWING THE SUMMIT AT ISMAILIA, THE UNITED STATES CAME FORWARD WITH AN AGENDA ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH. THAT AGENDA -- WHOSE FIRST ITEM IS A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES -- CONTINUES TO BE BASIS OF OUR APPROACH TO ACHIEVING CONCRETE DECISIONS.

-- FOR THE UNITED STATES TO CARRY FORWARD THIS ROLE, IT MUST HAVE COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THE APPROACH OF EACH OF THE PARTIES, AND THEY MUST UNDERSTAND THE US POSITION ON THE KEY ISSUES INVOLVED. PRESIDENT SADAT'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON SERVED THAT PURPOSE WELL, AND WE ARE HOPEFUL PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S TALKS WILL SERVE THE SAME PURPOSE. IN THE SPIRIT OF THE DEEP, FRIENDLY AND ENDURING TIES BETWEEN ISRAEL AND US, WE EXPECT TO HAVE THE THOROUGH-GOING TALKS IN A RELAXED ATMOSPHERE WITH THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER.

--WE SEE THE TALKS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER AS OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE FOR THE PROCESS OF COMMON UNDERSTANDING WHICH MUST LEAD TO CONCRETE DECISIONS IN THE WEEKS JUST AHEAD, IF THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE TO SUCCEED.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 JERUSA 00531 02 OF 02 261831Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 JERUSALEM 531

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-- IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS, THE UNITED STATE DOES NOT HAVE A
BLUEPRINT OR A PLAN. THE SETTLEMENT MUST BE NEGOTIATED BETWEEN
THE PARTIES THEMSELVES. BUT THE UNITED STATES DOES HAVE IDEAS
ON RESOLVING THE BASIC ISSUES, WHICH IT DOES PRESENT TO THE PARTIES A
T
MOMENTS IT JUDGES BEST TO HELP THEM MOVE TOWARDS COMPROMISE.

-- A CASE IN POINT IS THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. ASSISTANT
SECRETARY ATHERTON CLARIFIED THE POSITIONS OF EACH PARTY
ON THIS DECLARATION, AND RECEIVED PROPOSED LANGUAGE OF EACH FOR
IT. ALTHOUGH DIFFERENCES WERE NARROWED, NEITHER WAS ABLE TO
AGREE COMPLETELY TO THE OTHER'S LANGUAGE. NOW ATHERTON
HAS PRESENTED AN AMERICAN SUGGESTION WHICH WE HOPE CAN BE
ACCEPTED, AND HELP FORM THE BASIS FOR BROADENING THE NEGOTIATIONS
FOR A COMPROHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER
BEGIN UNDOUBTEDLY WILL BE DISCUSSING THIS SUGGESTION IN THEIR
TALSK IN WASHINGTON.

-- BOTH ISRAEL AND EGYPT WANT JORDAN TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND
ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON DISCUSSED THE PROJECT
THOROUGHLY WITH KING HUSSEIN IN AMMAN. BECAUSE OF
THE IMPORTANCE OF SAUDI ARABIA IN SUPPORTING THIS PEACE
PROCESS, ATHERTON ALSO WENT TO RIYADH TO INFORM SAUDI ARABIAN
OFFICIALS OF OUR APPROACH.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 JERUSA 00531 02 OF 02 261831Z

-- THE PRINCIPAL DIFFERENCE IN THE DECLARATION REMAINS OVER THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. THEIR DIFFERENCES ARE A MATTER OF PUBLIC RECORD. FOR OUR PART, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE DIFFERENCES ARE SO GREAT THAT A COMPROMISE CANNOT BE FOUND. WE HAVE PROPOSED THAT THAT COMPROMISE LANGUAGE BE SUBSTANTIALLY THE FORMULATION EXPRESSED BY PRESIDENT CARTER AT ASWAN.

-- IN OUR VIEW THIS LANGUAGE FORMS THE FRAMEWORK FOR A JUST SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION. THE CONCRETE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SOLUTION, INCLUDING INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS LOOKING TOWARD AN ULTIMATE SOLUTION, WOULD BE FOR THE PARTIES THEMSELVES TO NEGOTIATE WITHIN THAT FRAMEWORK. GUIDELINES FOR THOSE NEGOTIATIONS ARE THE SECOND POINT OF THE AGENDA FOR THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE.

-- WE HAVE LONG MADE CLEAR ALSO THAT ONE OF THE BASIC ISSUES ALL PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE AGREE MUST BE RESOLVED IS WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBORS TO LIVE WITHIN SECURED AND RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES. THIS IS A PRIME SUBJECT FOR NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

-- THE UNITED STATES POSITION IS THAT SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS FOR RESOLUTION OF THIS ISSUE MUST BE BASED ON UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION 242, INCLUDING THE NEED FOR WITHDRAWAL TO TAKE PLACE ON ALL FRONTS OF THE CONFLICT IN THE CONTEXT OF PEACE TREATIES. THESE TREATIES WILL EMBODY AGREEMENT ON NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS AND MUTUALLY ACCEPTED SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS PLUS ANY BORDER MODIFICATIONS BOTH SIDES CAN AGREE ON. WE EXPECT THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER TO BE GIVING ATTENTION IN THEIR TALKS TO THIS ISSUE AMONG OTHERS.

-- MUCH MISUNDERSTANDING HAS ALSO ARISEN IN THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS OVER ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN OCCUPIED

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 JERUSA 00531 02 OF 02 261831Z

TERRITORIES. THE MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CLEAR AWAY THIS MISUNDERSTANDING. THE AMERICAN POSITION REMAINS: THESE SETTLEMENTS ARE CONTRARY TO INTERNATIONAL LAW AND SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED. WE CONTINUE TO CONSIDER THEM AN OBSTACLE TO SUCCESSFUL PRESS NEGOTIATIONS. THEIR FUTURE IS OBVIOUSLY A SUBJECT FOR NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

IF PRESSED:

-- ON ARMS. WE DO NOT EXPECT THE ARMS PACKAGE PRESENTED BY THE PRESIDENT TO BE A PRIME TOPIC OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND PRIME MINISTER BEGIN, THOUGH, OF COURSE, WE WILL DISCUSS IT IF THE PRIME MINISTER RAISES IT. THE

UNITED STATES HAS A CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO THE SECURITY
OF ISRAEL WHICH WE ARE HONORING. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE
ARMS PACKAGE ALTERS THE BASIC MILITARY BALANCE IN THE REGION.

WE ALSO BELIEVE IT GIVES THE PARTIES INVOLVED THE
CONTINUED CONFIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE PEACE PROCESS UNDERWAY.

-- ON SYRIA. THOUGH MR. ATHERTON DID NOT VISIT SYRIA
THIS TIME, WE CERTAINLY DO NOT EXCLUDE A VISIT THERE AT SOME
POINT. SYRIA IS NOT PART OF THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS, THOUGH WE
HOPE AT SOME POINT SYRIA'S LEADERS WILL SEE IT IN THEIR INTEREST TO
REJOIN THE PROCESS.

-- ON THE BEGIN PLAN. WE CONSIDER THAT PRIME MINISTER BEGINS' PLAN
FOR SELF-RULE ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA HAS MANY POSITIVE ELEMENTS.
IT IS A START IN PRESENTING IDEAS FOR WORKING OUT CONCRETE
ARRANGMENTS ON THE GROUND FOR MOVING TOWARD A SOLUTION OF
THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE THROUGH AN INTERIM STAGE OR STAGES.
WE WILL BE DISCUSSING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER HOW
THESE IDEAS CAN BE FITTED INTO NEGOTIATIONS
FORESEEN IN THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

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PAGE 04 JERUSA 00531 02 OF 02 261831Z

CONFIDENTIAL

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